



For release: IMMEDIATE

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MEDIA ADVISORY FOR MARCH 16

**ASSEMBLY SPEAKER TO ANNOUNCE STEM CELL GRANTS
Up to \$80 million available for embryonic stem cell research**

Speaker of the California Assembly Fabian Núñez and members of the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), governing board for the state agency charged with managing the state's \$3 billion stem cell program, will hold a press conference on Friday, March 16, at 9:30 a.m. to discuss the latest round of research grants.

The ICOC will be meeting in public on Thursday, March 15, and Friday, March 16.

WHO:

- The Honorable Fabian Núñez, Speaker of the Assembly
- Ricardo Azziz, M.D., MPH, MBA, Chairman, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
- Jonathan Shestack, Founder & Vice President, Cure Autism Now
- Robert N. Klein, Chairman, Independent Citizens Oversight Committee

The 29-member Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC) is the governing board for the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM). The list of members is available at <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/faq/pdf/Members.pdf>.

WHAT:

The ICOC is expected to approve up to 25 grants totaling as much as \$80 million for human embryonic stem cell research in California. This will be the second set of embryonic stem cell research grants approved under Proposition 71, the Stem Cell Research and Cures Act, adopted by California voters in November 2004. (The first set was approved on February 16, 2007.) The agenda for the meeting is available at <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/meetings/2007/03-15-07.asp>

WHEN:

Press conference: Friday, March 16, 2007, 9:30 a.m.

Open ICOC Meeting: Thursday, March 15, 3:00 to 10: 00 p.m. and Friday, March 17, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

WHERE:

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

Harvey Morse Auditorium
South Tower, Plaza Level
8700 Beverly Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Validated parking for news media in Parking Lots 1, 2 and 4

WHY:

This will be the second set of grants focused on human embryonic stem cell research approved under Proposition 71, the innovative Stem Cell Research and Cures Act, adopted overwhelmingly by California voters in November 2004. In February, the ICOC approved 72 grants totaling nearly \$45 million, to researchers who are new to the field of stem cell research.

The grant applications to be considered on March 15th and 16th will go to established scientists who have been working with stem cells for some time. CIRM received 70 applications totaling more than \$175 million from researchers at 23 non-profit institutions in California for these funds.

The applications were reviewed by a committee of experts from outside California. Its recommendations are at http://www.cirm.ca.gov/publicsummaries/RFA_06-02/PublicList.html.

While litigation is delaying the issuance of \$3 billion in general obligation bonds authorized by Proposition 71, CIRM and the ICOC have received a \$150 million loan from the state's general fund, authorized by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, \$45 million in loans from private philanthropists, and another \$8 million in smaller loans and gifts.

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